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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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New Mexican Named Chairman of CLC

NASHVILLE (BP)—Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission members approved an operating budget for 1980-81 of \$600,000, honored their top executive for 20 years of service and approved expanded programs on strengthening families, race relations, hunger and Christian citizenship development.

David King of Santa Fe, N.M., was elected as the commission's new chairman succeeding John Claypool of Jackson, Miss. King, a member of First Baptist Church of Albuquerque, recently resigned as secretary of the New Mexico Department of Administration and Personnel and is a candidate for one of New Mexico's two seats in the United States House of Representatives.

Patricia Ayres, an at-large member from Sewanee, Tenn., was elected as vice-chairman and David George, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church of Nashville, was elected recording secretary.

The budget approved during the annual business session of the Southern Baptist Christian ethics agency reflects a 6.8 percent increase over last year in spite of only a 5 percent increase in Cooperative Program funds. The agency has projected a 50 percent increase in sales of literature and products from \$50,000 to \$75,000.

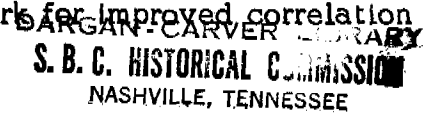
The budget does not include a cost-of-living adjustment for employees. Commission Chairman Claypool said the commission members "wrestled with what inflation is doing to us, but with our limited income we had no other alternatives and a cost-of-living adjustment was simply not possible."

Commission members also authorized a request of \$600,000 in Cooperative Program allocations for 1981-82. The request to be made before the Program Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee is a 27 percent increase over the 1980-81 allocation.

In supporting their request, the commission members cited new initiatives they feel are greatly needed among Southern Baptists in the areas of family, citizenship, racial and ethnic concerns, hunger, alcohol education and action, and other moral concerns affecting the life and work of the convention.

New programs authorized include production of video cassettes and cassette tapes for use by local churches on numerous moral issues with special emphasis on help for families. Authorization was also voted for a specialized conference to encourage preaching on ethical issues and consultations on peace with justice, Hispanics, and ethics and the media.

The national staff was asked to convene a meeting of the heads of Southern Baptist Convention agencies with program assignments related to hunger to plan a unified Southern Baptist effort for the promotion of World Hunger Sunday in 1981 and to work for improved correlation of Southern Baptist hunger relief efforts.



Commission members also passed resolutions expressing appreciation to the Presidential Commission on World Hunger for its work toward alleviation of domestic and world hunger and urging the Congress of the United States to enact legislation which will implement the recommendations of the presidential commission. The resolution referred to such legislation as the Hunger and Global Security Bill which is soon to be introduced in Congress.

A resolution on Christian citizenship passed by the commission members calls for the Christian Life Commission to strongly encourage Southern Baptists "to continue our current openness to political involvement in behalf of public righteousness, being careful to do so in ways that are biblically oriented and in line with historic Baptist principles."

In other action, the commission presented an award for distinguished service in Christian social ethics to G. Willis Bennett, professor of church and community and director of graduate studies at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Commission members and staff also honored Foy Valentine, executive director of the commission for 20 years of service. Included in the recognition was a cash gift of \$2,700 and a month's discretionary leave each year, in addition to his four weeks vacation, for study and writing.

Valentine expressed gratitude to God, to Southern Baptists, to the Christian Life Commission, and to the staff, and said he sensed among Southern Baptists a spirit of deeper commitment to the cause of applied Christianity and greater enthusiasm for doing the gospel than at any previous time in his two decades with the commission.

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Pressler 'Goes for Jugular'
In Fight to Win Convention

By Tom Miller

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LYNCHBURG, Va. (BP)—Conservatives are "going for the jugular" in their campaign to get control of Southern Baptist institutions, Houston appeals court judge Paul Pressler said here.

Pressler, who has gained national denominational prominence in the past two years, told a meeting of conservatives: "We are going for having knowledgeable, Bible-centered, Christ-honoring trustees of all of our institutions, who are not going to sit there like a bunch of dummies and rubber stamp everything that's presented to them, but who are going to inquire why this is being done, what is being taught, what is the finished product of our young people who come to our institutions, going to be."

The Texas politician addressed "A Conference on the Conservative Move in Our State and Our Convention," sponsored by Old Forest Road Baptist Church here, and its pastor, Arthur B. Ballard.

Pressler was joined for the conference by Paige Patterson, president of the Criswell Center for Biblical Studies in Dallas, and a leader in the conservative cause of biblical inerrancy.

Pressler said of the 1980 SBC resolution on doctrinal integrity, "The bottom line is trustees, not resolutions."

"I'm going to be in Los Angeles to vote for the nominees of the Committee on Boards as a result of Adrian Rogers' Committee on Committees, because that's going to make the difference," he said.

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"And I'm going to be in New Orleans and I'm going to be in Pittsburgh to vote for the nominees that come out of the Committee on Committees and the Committee on Boards because that's going to make the difference.

"By the time those three committees have gotten their trustees elected—and they will be—then we've got 60 percent good, reliable trustees on our institutions. Then they'll pay attention."

The surprise decision of Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church of Memphis, Tenn., not to seek the traditional second term as president of the 13.4 million member SBC, was termed a "blessing" by the judge, since current president Bailey Smith likely will be re-elected for a second term at the 1981 annual meeting in Los Angeles.

Los Angeles and Pittsburgh are cities where "grass roots Southern Baptists could not go" and control of the election of a president might not be possible, he said.

If tradition holds, a new president will be elected in New Orleans in 1982 and Kansas City in 1984. But Pressler and Patterson are not assuming victories.

In a question-and-answer period the two speakers were asked: "Are Texans as organized for this crucial one (the Los Angeles convention) as St. Louis?"

Patterson answered, "There are eight more crucial ones. Don't think the so-called moderate element will lie down and play dead."

Patterson said no effort probably will be made to unseat Smith, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Del City, Okla., as president, but he has heard there will be an alternate slate of nominees for the Committee on Boards report.

Patterson suggested budgeting money "to take your messengers to the convention," adding the suggestion is one of the few things on which he and Southern Seminary President Duke McCall agreed.

Pressler said a "great contribution to the cause of Christ is redeeming of Southern Baptist institutions even if it takes hurting some place else in the church budget to send every possible messenger to the convention."

Pressler did, however, take a firm stand for supporting the Cooperative Program.

In answer to a question from his host pastor, Pressler advised not cutting the Cooperative Program from the budget.

"Work within the framework of the Cooperative Program," Pressler said. "Give at least enough to have the maximum number of messengers."

However, in discussion, Patterson appeared to favor designated offering rather than Cooperative Program gifts. It was noted Virginia Baptists will consider an amendment to their constitution during the annual meeting Nov. 11-12 in Richmond which would change the formula for qualification of messengers from contributions "to the funds of the General Association" to a more specific statement gifts must be made through the Cooperative Program.

Patterson observed, "Clearly, this is taxation without representation," and added the proposed change is an attempt to "force a minimal doctrinal position by giving to things you don't really believe in. That is extremely unBaptistic and contrary to everything that has been done heretofore in Southern Baptist life."

Pressler said, "I want to remind you the tide is moving in the right direction. Our seminaries are going to be ones we are proud to support before too long. Hang in there and don't let them disenfranchise you while we're winning the vote and winning the victory."

Pressler said W. A. Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas, and SBC president in 1969-70, told him, "If I had known the powers I had as president of the Southern Baptist Convention, things would have been different. I didn't know I had the ability to appoint anybody to the Committee on Committees."

"So," Pressler quoted Criswell, "the first thing you've got to do is inform a president of the powers which he has. The second problem I had was that I did not know who the knowledgeable conservatives were throughout each state in the convention, and you need to know who your conservatives are."

Pressler suggested an organized chain of communication, including someone in each association and a layman in each church. This is necessary, said Pressler, because, "the press is not, has not been fair."

Noting a resolution passed by the Houston convention in 1979 deploring "overt political activity," Pressler said, "It's all coming from the other side," and pointed to Southern Seminary president Duke McCall, Louisville, Ky., pastor Wayne Dehoney and Houston pastor Kenneth Chafin "and others."

The politician identified a liberal as one "who believes the Bible does or could contain any kind of error," while admitting, "I am not a theologian. I believe everything the Bible says, but I'm not sure what it says."

In his sermons Patterson compared the condition of Israel in the fifth and sixth centuries BC to America and the Southern Baptist Convention in the 20th century.

He said, "The saddest part about our denomination is there is no shame that we've lost Wake Forest University completely. There's no shame that we have virtually lost the University of Richmond; no shame that in the institutions and even the pulpits of our Lord the Word of God is not honored and magnified, but rather, we talk about sociology and psychology and the events of the day."

Patterson said the "threat of (God's) judgment is on our denomination."

Referring to the denomination's Bold Mission Thrust, he said, "They're blaming the failure on us but it was already failing before the Bible issue ever came up."

During a prayer following an invitation, Patterson said he did not ask for seminary professors to be removed from their positions, but that a revival occur in their hearts.

In a question-and-answer period, Patterson emphasized that when using the terms inerrant and infallible, he is always talking about the nonexistent autograph (original) writings.

"But," he declared, "in 98 to 99 percent we know exactly what the original was."

He deprecated the King James Version of the Bible as a 1611 translation "by a bunch of Anglicans, most of whom were lost," and cited "tragic translation" in the King James Version.

Smith Quote Causes
Dismay in Israel

ASHKELON, Israel (BP)—Southern Baptist representatives in Israel expressed dismay at news reports broadcast throughout Israel quoting Southern Baptist Convention President Bailey Smith saying God does not hear the prayer of Jews.

Reports of Smith's comments, broadcast in both English and Hebrew, reached Israel on the eve of Yom Kippur, creating special consternation among Jews and Christians at a time of a national religious observance.

"Yom Kippur is the holiest day in the year to the Jews—a day when each one turns to God in repentance to pray for forgiveness," explained Elizabeth Smith, press representative for the Israel mission.

Although emphasizing he had not read the full text of Bailey Smith's statement, James W. Smith, Foreign Mission Board representative in Israel for 25 years, said, "As it was broadcast, the statement itself has the potential of doing great harm to the friendly relations developed between Baptists and Jewish Israelis over the years."

Smith's remarks, made during a national religious-political gathering in August, were lifted from a transcript of his sermon by American Jewish leaders and circulated widely to news media and others.

In them, Smith said: "With all due respect to those dear people... God Almighty does not hear the prayer of a Jew," because Jews have not accepted Jesus as Messiah.

In summing up feelings of Foreign Mission Board representatives in Israel, Don Mantooth, acting administrator for the mission, said he and his colleagues "call on our Baptist leaders in America to be sensitive to the feelings and beliefs of our Jewish friends and to the situation in which Baptist representatives in Israel labor."

"The statement only adds distance to the separation between Christians and Jews," Mantooth added. "Southern Baptist representatives in Israel are attempting to share with the people of this land that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior to all who will turn to him."

"This sharing of the gospel is made more difficult under conditions of hostility," he said. "Even our non-religious Jewish friends are offended by such statements that cast aspersions on the faith of their ancestors."

Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks said in Richmond, "I certainly agree with our missionaries in strongly supporting the centrality and uniqueness of the revelation of God in Christ. This is what we are committed to sharing with everyone in the world. However, I would feel presumptuous to determine whether God hears other people or not, particularly in light of such things as the experience of Cornelius, a Roman soldier and non-believer. In Acts 10:30-31, the angel told Cornelius that God had heard his prayer. This was the occasion for God sending Peter to share Christ with him."

Added J.D. Hughey, Foreign Mission Board area director for Europe and the Middle East: "In Old Testament times, God heard the patriarchs, the psalmists, the prophets and others, good and bad, who called to him. I think he is capable of hearing all prayers and answering according to his love and wisdom."

Already, reactions ranging from outrage to extreme caution have begun reaching the Israel mission, Elizabeth Smith said.

One Jewish Christian, who attends Baptist services in Jerusalem, expressed "fervent hope" the remarks were taken out of context. "If they are correctly quoted and if he is really the spokesman for Southern Baptists, I don't want anything more to do with Southern Baptists. A true Christian would never presume to say such a thing," he said. He was assured that in the Southern Baptist system, a person speaks only for himself.

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